

§ 20-130.1. Use of red or blue lights on vehicles prohibited; exceptions.

(a) It is unlawful for any person to install or activate or operate a red light in or on any vehicle in this State. As used in this subsection, unless the context requires otherwise, "red light" means an operable red light not sealed in the manufacturer's original package which: (i) is designed for use by an emergency vehicle or is similar in appearance to a red light designed for use by an emergency vehicle; and (ii) can be operated by use of the vehicle's battery, vehicle's electrical system, or a dry cell battery. As used in this subsection, the term "red light" shall also mean any red light installed on a vehicle after initial manufacture of the vehicle.

(b) The provisions of subsection (a) of this section do not apply to the following:

- (1) A police vehicle.
- (2) A highway patrol vehicle.
- (3) A vehicle owned by the Wildlife Resources Commission and operated exclusively for law enforcement, firefighting, or other emergency response purposes.
- (4) An ambulance.
- (5) A vehicle used by an organ procurement organization or agency for the recovery and transportation of blood, human tissues, or organs for transplantation.
- (6) A fire-fighting vehicle.
- (7) A school bus.
- (8) A vehicle operated by any member of a municipal or rural fire department in the performance of his duties, regardless of whether members of that fire department are paid or voluntary.
- (9) A vehicle of a voluntary lifesaving organization (including the private vehicles of the members of such an organization) that has been officially approved by the local police authorities and which is manned or operated by members of that organization while answering an official call.
- (10) A vehicle operated by medical doctors or anesthetists in emergencies.
- (11) A motor vehicle used in law enforcement by the sheriff, or any salaried rural policeman in any county, regardless of whether or not the county owns the vehicle.
- (11a) A vehicle operated by the State Fire Marshal or his representatives in the performance of their duties, whether or not the State owns the vehicle.
- (12) A vehicle operated by any county fire marshal, assistant fire marshal, or emergency management coordinator in the performance of his duties, regardless of whether or not the county owns the vehicle.
- (13) A light required by the Federal Highway Administration.
- (14) A vehicle operated by a transplant coordinator who is an employee of an organ procurement organization or agency when the transplant coordinator is responding to a call to recover or transport human tissues or organs for transplantation.
- (15) A vehicle operated by an emergency medical service as an emergency support vehicle.
- (16) A State emergency management vehicle.
- (17) An Incident Management Assistance Patrol vehicle operated by the Department of Transportation, when using rear-facing red lights while stopped for the purpose of providing assistance or incident management.
- (18) A vehicle operated by the Division of Marine Fisheries of the Department of Environmental Quality or the Division of Parks and Recreation of the

Department of Natural and Cultural Resources that is used for law enforcement, firefighting, or other emergency response purpose.

- (19) A vehicle operated by the North Carolina Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services that is used for law enforcement, firefighting, or other emergency response purpose.
- (20) A vehicle operated by official members or Teams of REACT International, Inc., that is used to provide additional manpower authorized by law enforcement, firefighting, or other emergency response entities.

(c) It is unlawful for any person to possess a blue light or to install, activate, or operate a blue light in or on any vehicle in this State, except for a publicly owned vehicle used for law enforcement purposes or any other vehicle when used by law enforcement officers in the performance of their official duties. As used in this subsection, unless the context requires otherwise, "blue light" means any blue light installed on a vehicle after initial manufacture of the vehicle; or an operable blue light which:

- (1) Is not (i) being installed on, held in inventory for the purpose of being installed on, or held in inventory for the purpose of sale for installation on a vehicle on which it may be lawfully operated or (ii) installed on a vehicle which is used solely for the purpose of demonstrating the blue light for sale to law enforcement personnel;
- (1a) Is designed for use by an emergency vehicle, or is similar in appearance to a blue light designed for use by an emergency vehicle; and
- (2) Can be operated by use of the vehicle's battery, the vehicle's electrical system, or a dry cell battery.

(c1) The provisions of subsection (c) of this section do not apply to the possession and installation of an inoperable blue light on a vehicle that is inspected by and registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles as a specially constructed vehicle and that is used primarily for participation in shows, exhibitions, parades, or holiday/weekend activities, and not for general daily transportation. For purposes of this subsection, "inoperable blue light" means a blue-colored lamp housing or cover that does not contain a lamp or other mechanism having the ability to produce or emit illumination.

(d) Repealed by Session Laws 1999-249, s. 1.

(e) Violation of subsection (a) or (c) of this section is a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1943, c. 726; 1947, c. 1032; 1953, c. 354; 1955, c. 528; 1957, c. 65, s. 11; 1959, c. 166, s. 2; c. 1170, s. 2; 1967, c. 651, s. 1; 1971, c. 1214; 1977, c. 52, s. 2; c. 438, s. 2; 1979, c. 653, s. 1; c. 887; 1983, c. 32, s. 1; c. 768, s. 6; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 1027, s. 50; 1989, c. 537, s. 2; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1020, s. 2; 1991, c. 263, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 361; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 719, s. 1; 1995, c. 168, s. 1; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 756, s. 16; 1999-249, s. 1; 2005-152, s. 1; 2009-526, s. 1; 2009-550, s. 3; 2010-132, s. 11; 2013-415, s. 1(b); 2015-241, s. 14.30(ff); 2015-276, s. 2.)